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## **EFFECTIVE PEDAGOGY: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS FOR EARLY GRADE PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Teachers in the classroom learning process are considered to play a crucial role in helping students develop a positive attitude towards learning, fostering curiosity, encouraging independence, and promoting intellectual reasoning accuracy, as well as creating conditions for successful learning. There are three fields of knowledge that are closely related to the success of early elementary classroom learning: educational psychology, pedagogy, and educational sociology. The key to a teacher's success in managing the teaching and learning process, particularly in early elementary classrooms, is understanding the child. Understanding the child means recognising individual characteristics related to their physical, psychological, and social issues, including their family background. Therefore, one of the most essential areas of knowledge that early elementary teachers need to master is pedagogy. The type of research used in this study is qualitative research. This research involves the examination of concepts and theories from various literature, journals, and books. Developing a conceptual and theoretical framework forms the foundation of this literature or library study. The results of the study reveal: The importance of pedagogical knowledge for early elementary teachers; Understanding the characteristics of early elementary school students; identifying aspects that teachers need to explore in first-grade students, especially concerning individual differences, which include physical, psychological, and social factors.

**Keywords:** *Pedagogy; Teacher; Early Elementary Classroom.*

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### **ABSTRACT**

Teachers in the classroom learning process are seen to play an important role in helping learners to build positive attitudes to learning, arouse curiosity, encourage independence and accuracy of intellectual logic and create conditions for success in learning. There are three areas of science that are closely related to successful learning in the early primary grades: Educational psychology, pedagogy and educational sociology. The beginning of a teacher's success in managing the learning and teaching process, especially in the early elementary grades, is knowing the child. Knowing children in the sense of knowing individual characteristics related to physical, psychological and social life problems of children including family background. For this reason, one of the most important knowledge explored by an early grade teacher is pedagogy. The type of research used in this study is qualitative research. This research uses the study of concepts and theories from various literatures, journals, and books. Building a concept and theory is the basis of literature study research or literature review. The results of the study revealed that; The importance of pedagogical knowledge for early grade elementary school teachers; Knowing the characteristics of early elementary school students; and knowing the aspects that must be explored by teachers in grade 1 elementary school students, especially related to individuals (individual defferencies), namely physical, psychological and social factors.

**Keywords:** *Pedagogy; Teacher; Early Grade Elementary.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Early grade teachers, especially grade I elementary school teachers, play an important role in shaping the basis of education and student character. For this reason, there are several knowledge and skills that must be possessed by grade I teachers, including basic pedagogics which include the theory and practice of effective teaching for early childhood; learning methods that are appropriate for the cognitive, emotional, and social development of children aged 6-7 years; and designing and implementing interesting and meaningful lesson plans<sup>1</sup>.

In the Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System article 39 paragraphs 1 and 2 states that:

- 1) Education personnel are tasked with carrying out administration, management, development, supervision, and technical services to support the education process in education units.
- 2) Educators are professionals who are tasked with carrying out the learning process, assessing learning outcomes, conducting guidance and training, as well as research and community service, especially for educators in higher education.

Another knowledge that grade 1 teachers should have is the science of child development. Teachers should have knowledge of the stages of child development physically, cognitively, emotionally and socially; be able to recognise signs of normal and upnormal development and provide appropriate support.<sup>2</sup>

Another area of knowledge that class I teachers should have is classroom management, i.e. mastering effective classroom management techniques to create a

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<sup>1</sup> Moh Uzer Usman, *Becoming a Professional Teacher* (Remaja Rosdakarya, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Robert E Slavin, 'Educational Psychology Theory and Practice', *Jakarta: Index*, 2011.

positive and conducive learning environment; and being able to manage student behaviour in a constructive and supportive way .<sup>3</sup>

To support learning, teachers must also master the skills of using technology in the learning process and be able to integrate digital tools and information technology in teaching. Successful learning in grade 1 is also influenced by interpersonal communication, so teachers must be able to communicate effectively with students, parents and colleagues; demonstrate empathy, patience and good listening skills.

To meet these challenges, teachers must always strive to improve their professional skills and knowledge. Thus, they will be successful in educating students in the early grades or grade I, which is a transition from the phase of playing and socialising in PAUD/TK to the academic learning process.

## **METHODS**

The research method is an attempt to test as science, these efforts using the scientific method. In order to keep science still has a scientific price when conducting research<sup>4</sup> . Thus research is a test of a science with scientific method procedures. This research will conduct an assessment of concepts and theories from various literature, journals, and books. Building a concept and theory is the basis of literature study research or literature review<sup>5</sup> . Literature review is an obligation in academia with the aim of developing from theoretical and practical aspects .<sup>6</sup>

The type of research used in the research is qualitative research, namely research that does not use quantitative data or statistical measuring instruments<sup>7</sup> . In accordance with the object of this article, this type of research is a category of library research, namely a series of studies using library studies. According to

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<sup>3</sup> Agung Sunarto and Agung Hartono, *Learner Development* (Asdi Mahasatya, 2006).

<sup>4</sup> Sutrisno Hadi, 'Research Methodology I, Yogyakarta: Publishing Foundation of Fak', *Psychology UGM*, 1986.

<sup>5</sup> V Wiratna Sujarweni, *Research Methodology* (Pustaka Baru Perss, 2014).

<sup>6</sup> H M Sukardi, *Educational Research Methodology: Competence and Practice (Revised Edition)* (Bumi Aksara, 2021).

<sup>7</sup> Arikunto Sa Nasution, *Skinative Naturalistic Writing Methods* (Tarsito, 1998).

Abdul Rahman Sholeh, library research can be called research by looking for data in libraries, books, magazines, documents, and historical stories. Library research limits research to library collections only without field research, so it only utilises library data sources to obtain research data.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The importance of pedagogical knowledge for early grade teachers**

There are three fields of science that are closely related to successful learning in the early primary grades: Educational psychology, pedagogy and sociology of education. The basic concepts of educational psychology provide an understanding of children as learners, how children learn, how teachers motivate children to learn and how teachers evaluate learning outcomes.

The purpose of studying psychology in education is to understand and improve the learning process. Pedagogy is the study of education, etymologically derived from the Greek words "paedos" which means boy and "agogos" which means to lead, guide. So pedagogics literally means a boy's helper in ancient Greece, whose job was to take his employer's children to school.

Then figuratively pedagogics is an expert who guides children towards certain life goals, or the term is now called an educator. Characteristics of Early Elementary Students. According to Prof. Dr. J. Hoogveld (Netherlands) Pedagogics is a science that studies the problem of guiding children towards certain goals, namely so that they will be able to independently complete their life tasks. Pedagogic is the science of child education, while Andragogy is the science of adult education. "Pedagogy is the science or art of teaching. The term refers to learning strategies or learning styles", and pedagogy also sometimes refers to the appropriate use of teaching strategies. In relation to the teaching strategy, a teaching philosophy is applied and influenced by the background knowledge and experience, personal situation, environment, and learning objectives formulated by the learner and teacher. One example is the Socratic school of thought.

Sociology of Education is a combination of the words sociology and education. According to Brinkerhoft and White, sociology means a systematic study of human social interaction. While the meaning of the word education according to KBBI is a process of changing the attitudes and behaviour of a person or group in an effort to mature humans through teaching and training efforts. From these two definitions it can be interpreted that the sociology of education is a science that examines and studies the relationship between society where social interaction occurs with education in it. In the relationship between sociology and education, it can be seen how society affects education and vice versa how education itself affects society.

### **Characteristics of Early Primary Students**

Nowadays, many educators are less attentive in learning the growth and development patterns of students which are actually very useful for the smooth learning process. With the lack of understanding of educators with the growth and development patterns of their students, there will be several obstacles in the learning process such as: lack of understanding of the material presented by the educator.

The developmental characteristics of children who are in the early grades of elementary school are children who are in the early age range. This early age period is a short period of child development but is a very important period for life. Therefore, at this time all the potential of the child needs to be encouraged so that it will develop optimally.

The developmental characteristics of children in grades one, two and three are usually physical growth has reached maturity, they are able to control their body and balance. For the development of intelligence, children in the early grades of primary school are shown by their ability to perform seriation, classify objects, interest in numbers and writing, increase vocabulary, enjoy talking, understand cause and effect and develop an understanding of space and time.

It is important for educators to know the characteristics of students, so that educators are able to carry out teaching according to the needs and abilities of

students. Teaching in accordance with student characteristics will also minimise the emergence of problems in learning at school, so that it can help students achieve the expected learning objectives. Elementary age children do require extra attention, because the elementary age period experiences a lot of development.

Elementary school-age children are categorised as experiencing many drastic changes both physically and mentally. Early elementary school students (7-9 years old) are learning many things in the surrounding environment. There are several characteristics as well as skills of early elementary school students (7-9 years) that need to be developed such as: 1) Social-help skills, students need to develop social relationships to help each other. In this phase students show independence, self-reliance, friendship, and competition; 2) play skills, students love to move such as playing, jumping, running, etc. In this phase students are also very expressive. In this phase students are also very expressive. The development that occurs at early elementary age needs to be considered so that these potentials and characteristics can emerge as expected. That way, students are able to achieve learning well according to the objectives.

Understanding students means understanding their symptoms or conditions. To know the movement characteristics of elementary school students, it is first necessary to understand the level of development of elementary school students according to their age level. In general, the characteristics of elementary school students include:

1. Learn to form a healthy attitude towards themselves as biological beings
2. Learn to get along with peers
3. Learn to play the role of their gender
4. Learn basic skills in reading, writing and arithmetic
5. Learn to develop everyday concepts
6. Developing a conscience
7. Learn to gain personal freedom

8. Developing positive traits.<sup>8</sup>
9. Have a rule-abiding nature.
10. A tendency to praise oneself.
11. Likes to compare oneself with others.
12. If you cannot complete the task, then the task is considered unimportant.
13. Realistic, and curious.
14. The tendency to do life activities that are practical and real (Depdikbud, 1978)
15. Towards the end of this period there is an interest in specialised subjects, talents and interests.
16. likes to form peer groups to play together.

Primary school education can be broken down into two phases, namely: The low-grade period, approximately 6 years or 7 years of age - 9 years or 10 years of age.

In particular, the characteristics of low-grade primary school students (grade 1, grade 2, and grade 3) are as follows:

- a. General characteristics
  - 1) Slow reaction time
  - 2) Imperfect muscle coordination
  - 3) Likes to fight
  - 4) Likes to move, play, climb
  - 5) Actively excited by regular sounds
- b. Characteristics of intelligence
  - 1) Lack of concentration ability
  - 2) Very limited willingness to think
  - 3) A penchant for repeating activities
- c. Social characteristics
  - 1) A passion for the dramatic

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<sup>8</sup> Danim Sudarwan and H Khairil, *Educational Psychology (In a New Perspective)* (Alfabetasunar, 2011).

- 2) Daydreaming and copying
  - 3) Love the state of nature
  - 4) Love stories
  - 5) Brave nature
  - 6) Happy to be praised
- d. Movement activities performed

1) Mimic

At the lower levels of primary school, children in play like to imitate what they see. The movements seen on TV or movements directly performed by other people, friends or animals.

2) Manipulation.

Low-grade children spontaneously perform the movements of the objects they observe. But from the observation of the object, the child performs the movements that he likes.

The high school class period is approximately 9 years old or 10 years old - 12 years old or 13 years old. While the characteristics of elementary school children at high levels have few similarities with the lower grades. The characteristics of the high class include:

a. General characteristics

- 1) Fast reaction time
- 2) Perfect muscle coordination
- 3) Love to move and play

b. Characteristics of intelligence

- 1) Has the ability to focus attention
- 2) More thinking ability

c. Social characteristics

- 1) Dislikes things that are drama
- 2) Love the social environment
- 3) Love stories about the social environment
- 4) Brave nature but still uses logic



d. Movement activities performed

- 1) Children have the willingness to perform a higher activity. So have the ability to express from the activities performed.
- 2) Articulation<sup>9</sup>

Elementary school age children (6-12 years old) are referred to as middle childhood. It is at this time that it is called the mature age for children to learn. This is because children want to master new skills given by teachers at school, that one of the signs of the beginning of this schooling period is the child's attitude towards the family is no longer egocentric but objective and empirical towards the outside world.

So it can be concluded that there is already an intellectual attitude so this period is called the intellectual period.

This is in line with the opinion that this school age period is often referred to as the intellectual period or the school compatibility period<sup>10</sup>. At this time children are relatively easy to educate than the period before and after.

**Aspects that teachers should explore with grade 1 students**

There are at least three important things that teachers must understand in teaching with children, especially related to individual differences, namely physical, psychological and social factors:

1. The main physical factors are hearing, vision, previous illnesses and posture.
2. Psychological factors concern the level of intelligence (mental retardation and gifted children), character, learning style and family problems.

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<sup>9</sup> Sunarto Sunarto, 'Development of Innovative Creativity in Art Education through Mukidi Learning', *Refleksi Edukatika: Scientific Journal of Education*, 8.2 (2018).

<sup>10</sup> Siti Fadillah, Sri Wahyuni, and Azlin Atika Putri, 'Implementation of Child Development Assessment in Online Learning', *ABDI PAUD Journal*, 2.1 (2021), pp. 32-35.

3. Meanwhile, social factors are related to the household (family education level, family study habits), living environment, community culture about education.

If a teacher already has knowledge and skills about pedagogy, then for successful learning the teacher must also understand:

1. Learning strategy
2. Mastering the subject matter

Armed with an understanding of the psychology, pedagogy and sociology of education, teachers will be able to:

1. Understand the principles of learning
2. Understand a child's strengths and limitations
3. Use appropriate teaching methods
4. Can provide encouragement for children to study well

## **CLOSING**

The beginning of a teacher's success in managing the learning and teaching process, especially in the early elementary grades, is knowing the child. Knowing children in the sense of knowing individual characteristics related to physical, psychological and social life problems of children including family background. For this reason, one of the most important knowledge explored by an early grade teacher is pedagogy.

A teacher who has a good grasp of pedagogy will be able to maximise the interaction between teacher and students. The teacher will be able to design the learning process well according to the talents and interests and in accordance with the cognitive and emotional development of students. By considering the stage of development and potential of each student, the teaching provided will be more in line with the needs of each individual.

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